

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
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February 3, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Dear Mr. President:

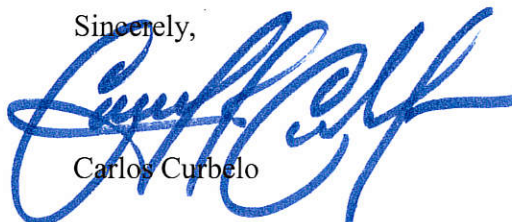
As you develop priorities to be included in the FY2018 Budget proposal that will soon be sent to Congress, I respectfully request that you provide robust funding for the Internal Revenue Service Office of Taxpayer Services. While the leadership of the IRS has been the subject of controversy in recent years, I believe the work being done with funds provided for Taxpayer Services is commendable and worthy of your full and fair consideration.

Included in Taxpayer Services offered by the IRS are such programs as Low Income Taxpayer Clinics (LITC), Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE), and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) grants. In addition, the Taxpayer Advocate Services provides assistance to taxpayers who need help navigating the IRS. Each program is specifically targeted to ensure tax payers have access to services where they can confidently file returns without fear of being scammed by fraudulent preparers. For example, VITA organizes IRS-certified volunteers who offer free tax services to individuals with an annual income of less than \$54,000 and those with limited proficiency in English. This program is critical to the residents of South Florida I am honored to represent, where tax fraud and abuse of low-income filers is rampant, especially among immigrant communities. According to Branches, the lead agency of the VITA program in Miami-Dade County, approximately 60% of residents qualify for assistance. In 2016, Branches helped residents file 9,845 tax returns at no cost and secure \$11.5 million in refunds.

Of equal importance is the Tax Counseling for the Elderly program which specializes in questions about pensions and retirement-related issues unique to taxpayers who are age 60 and older. TCE, like VITA, has served as an invaluable asset to numerous underserved communities and has played a prominent role in allowing a greater number of taxpayers to file electronically.

Funding for these essential services has received bipartisan support under both Republican and Democratic Administrations. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have continued to include strong funding for taxpayer services regardless of which party is in the majority. We respectfully ask that you increase funding for Taxpayer Services in FY18 and look forward to working together to grow these programs that have already proven to assist the most vulnerable in our country.

Sincerely,



Carlos Curbelo